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DEVOTED TO THE PROPAGANDA OF FREEDOM OF THOUGHT



MRS. M. FISKE,

Steadfast and True Through Years of Sorrow and Pain.

MRS. M. FISKE

Once the sincere human heart becomes firm in its devotion to truth the powers of orthodox superstition shall not prevail against it.

Woman is admittedly the mainstay of the orthodox church. Upon her back falls the burden of supporting this gigantic superstition. The high regard and esteem man entertains for mother, sister, wife and daughter, prevents, in many instances, any intrusion upon her religious proclivities, and feeling thus encouraged, she plods along to give strength to that very institution that leads to her constant degradation.

This is the rule, but there are many exceptions, and, in the course of time, the exceptions will prove to be in excess of those conforming to the rule. True, indeed, all women cannot be a Josephine K. Henry or a Harriet M. Clossz, but the subject of this sketch, in the face of trials and tribulations, scorned the pretensions of the orthodox superstition, and adhering to truth, has lived to witness the partial triumph of the principles of Free-thought. This sketch is partly autobiographic, as we have preferred to have the story told in a personal vein that our readers may see and realize the full worth of such a noble and heroic character.

Mrs. M. Fiske was the ninth child of Lewis R. and Sarah T. Anthony. She was born at Sandford, New York, on the 20th day of September 1846, and is, therefore, in her sixty-third year. At fifteen years of age she moved with her parents to Hammonton, New Jersey, where she spent many years of her life, and in 1866, or at the age of 20 years, she was married to John D. Fiske, later well known in the Free-thought cause. Her husband went through the Civil War, serving four years in Nim's Battalion, Second Massachusetts Artillery. Four children were born to them—three sons and a daughter. The eldest son, Willie, being an expert swimmer, had already saved three lives from a watery grave, but at the age of nineteen years, he swam to the rescue of a fourth, saved the life he had struggled for, but his strength gave out and he found a watery grave himself. This was the first great affliction that came to the life of the devoted mother. True to its stubborn persistency, the Christian superstition assailed her even in the moment of such a trial. Speaking of this incident herself, Mrs. Fiske says: "One good praying Methodist woman came to me and said, 'Now Willie has gone to hell; you had better get religion before you go.' Her reply was characteristic of a true life, for the sorrowing mother immediately spoke up and said: 'If my Willie has gone to hell, I want to go there too, as hell would be heaven with him, heaven hell without him."

Of course, it had never occurred to this praying Methodist woman, that one who had sacrificed his own life in the service of others, not believing, could possibly deserve nught but hell. Yet this is true Christian teaching, and realizing the absurdity of such an infamous doctrine, Mrs. Fiske spurned the system, and has kept her Free-thought principles intact through all the intervening years, and even in her advanced age, is as loyal and true to Freedom's cause as she was in the days of her vigor and youth.

Concerning her own tendencies to Free-thought, Mrs. Fiske writes: "My father was a pioneer in Sandford. His nearest neighbors were Indians, bears and panthers. My father had only words of praise for the Indians. He was, at one time, a red-hot Methodist. He attended church and revivals. At about the time of my birth he broke away from the church and became a Free-

thinker. Ministers came to our house to argue with my father that he was wrong. Father proved to them from the Bible that they were wrong and this made them mad. I listened to the argument. They gave us no peace, and father challenged them to a debate in the largest hall they could find. It was accepted. The platform was filled with ministers, all arrayed against my father. When he entered the hall, his arms were full of books, a large Bible on the top. Other men came behind, also carrying books for him. The ministers asked him what he intended to do with the books, and when he replied that they were to be used by him for references, they refused to debate with him and left the hall. Many years after that, I met and talked with a gentleman who was present and remembered the incident quite well. It was from my father that I learned the inconsistency and absurdity of the Christian system of religion."

Even the wisest and best are prone to error. Mistakes will arise in the course of a life, and one mistake, now recognized and admitted by Mrs. Fiske, draws a valuable and striking lesson to others. Her motherly instinct had led her not to interfere with her own children's belief, preferring that they should think matters out for themselves. The result was that the children living became church members, and looking back at the experiences of the years, she says: "I had done wrong not to fortify my children's minds on the subject of religion, but I did not want them to be taught the old fables; yet they fell victims to designing church members who dealt underhand in going about it. While I did not know what was going on, a preacher came to my house. He said not a word to me on the subject of religion. He sat and waited for my son to come home. About the hour for his arrival the preacher went out and laid in wait for him. The result was my boy joined the church. Then they came to me, and because my boys had joined, insisted that I should also join. They all knew by this time why I refused to do so."

But what was the result? Christian charity, rare at best, became at its best. Punishment fell upon this brave heart for her steadfastness to the truth. Talk about martyrdom, why all the sufferings of all the martyrs combined could not exceed the Christian cruelty inflicted upon this woman. Read—

"My boys joining the church, mother at once became the old infidel. They would not live with me. Hot and angry words were the rule. We parted, each to live our own life. I could not live their life, as they bade me. My eldest boy run the home, but told me he would sell out, bag and baggage, unless I stopped indulging in arguments with the Methodists. As I had never commenced any of the arguments, always having them forced upon me, I told him I was not a slave, and so we parted. At the moment of the separation, I told him that if the time should ever come that he could break away from the degrading superstition, then come to mother. We meet, sometimes, but do not speak. We may never."

Talk about courage, why no soldier ever went to battle possessed of such dauntless spirit and heroism.

It is to such noble characters as that here depicted that Free-thought finds its greatest strength. No trial, no tribulation, no threat, no specious promise could turn her from her chosen course, and to give honor to such, the Blade cheerfully accords Mrs. Fiske a place in the list of immortals.

Evangelical Churches are Menaced

The Great Wane of Intellectual Progress Threatens to Engulf the Church Unless it Conforms to Modern Demands.

(By Henry C. Warnack.)

Religions are based on the yearning of people for the completeness of life. Mankind looks to them to inspire conduct, to afford comfort in the face of the seemingly adverse, and to shed light upon the problem of adjusting existence on earth to eternal being. Belief involves conduct. If we are to act as if we believed or disbelieved certain postulates, what we believe becomes of vital importance. If we believe beautiful, hopeful, constructive tenets, then our deeds will be lovely and will bring us peace and happiness. Failure so to base our transcendent beliefs is to be without the purpose and joy which make living worth while. For this reason the sentiments that a man entertains and which are classed as religion are the greatest concern of everyday life.

All doctrine of life hinges on how successful it is in relating the man within to the world without. Whatever aids in establishing harmony between the life of the heart and the life visible to the eyes and tangible to the touch, is truth. It is the bread of life and it never disagrees, never disturbs and never confuses. This satisfaction we demand of religion. We look to it to link the seen and the unseen and to bring about a union of sentiment and reason that shall make us strong for life.

There has never been a time when man as a reasonable creature did not count of worth only such statements of principle as could be applied to his own life. As mankind approaches a superior intelligence this tendency to exact of religion such experiences as are personal and intimate increases to the point of an insistent demand. No matter how great or how true a principle may be, if it cannot be applied to personality, it has no value to the individual. If religion is to be of comfort to us it must offer a living experience, a personal and direct revelation and a perpetual demonstration.

Any sort of faith is adequate in its last analysis if it offers a living hypothesis. To be of effect, religion must lay strong hold upon the individual consciousness, and offer strength and light, consolation and power, peace and understanding, promise and fulfillment, courage and wisdom, and all of the attributes and living, infallible

principles which, if faithfully followed, will lead to satisfaction in personal conduct.

To know that another healed the sick, raised the dead and went about doing all the good that noble impulses inspired him to do is valueless to us unless we can find the same principles of power which directed his life, and, finding them, so live within them that we may at least partially share the same blessedness of conviction and conduct which made his life worthy of emulation.

The evangelical churches are societies of persons. They are strong in so far as they represent the highest purpose of a number of units. There is no strength in numbers unless there is unity of purpose, and an organization can hope to be continued only so long as it represents the purpose of its members and by this representation continues to merit their support.

For any of these bodies to be deceived because there is no immediate upheaval and no sudden depletion within its ranks, is blindness, or at least it is spiritual and intellectual near-sightedness. Great revolutions depend upon the gradual unfoldment of the consciousness of many individuals, and while the final affirmation of this consciousness sometimes is expressed in forms of such force as to radically affect all elements that resist them, they have nevertheless arrived step by step and the understanding elements have long held them in recognition, and are not disrupted or disturbed by their actual announcement.

One feature which leads some churches to sit in smug complacency while the hearts of their members turn from them, is that understanding and growth are so great in their wisdom, in their humility and assurance, that they make no contentions or disputes or arguments, but gladly confess all of the partial views of truth which any society or individual has a ca-

pacity to reflect. The great waves of religious reform which are at this moment setting the world in harmony with the power of their resistless vibrations, have no quarrel to make with any of these churches, but welcome in love every utterance of truth which they are large enough to express.

Because all the ground upon which they stand is not suddenly swept from beneath their foundations is no reason why these churches should become fixed in the assumption of security. People may receive with gratitude all that they have to offer, but they cannot feed their growing minds upon husks, and as the light of personal revelation exceeds the light of the provided word of the pulpit they will take more and more within themselves.

All these forms rely upon plasticity for permanence. Forms which are not plastic will break under strain. They reach their limit of size and are then divided. If the function of one of these churches does not change to correspond with the need of its members, it will either be reorganized or dissolved. It will not be lost, but it will be expressed in new forms which meet the new demands. Men individually are advancing in consciousness, and if these churches fail to so modify, so compromise and so rejuvenate as to fully represent the ideals and purposes of their progressive units, they will cease to be of service, and no form ever yet outlived its usefulness.

Increase of understanding on the part of the individual member emphasizes the insufficiency of the churches, whenever they fail the broadening conceptions and comprehension of the member. If the whole does not function the needs of the unit there is disorder, and disintegration will follow unless the order is so plastic as to anticipate and accommodate all new requirements.

Persistence of Superstition

Humanity's Cain from the Sublime Martyrdom of Bruno to Sat'sfy the Insensate Greed of Orthodoxy.

(By Dr. T. J. Bowles.)

I recall with a shudder the sad and awful fate of the immortal Bruno, whose priceless life was extinguished in flames of fire

by the bloody hands of the priests of superstition.

This sublime and immortal man lived in the dark night of the middle ages, and like the sun in the heavens above us, he shed light upon all the world; he was the herald of the civilization which we enjoy today; he discovered that besides this little grain of sand which we call the earth, that there

are millions of other worlds in the abysmal depths of space. He also discovered that the doctrine of transubstantiation which then ruled the world was an absurd and savage superstition; he informed the ignorant and priest-ridden world that the infinite and eternal power that kept all the planets in their orbits, could not be swallowed by drinking a cup of sacramental wine, or eating a wafer made of unleavened dough.

This infinitely absurd superstition that man could eat the God of the Universe, and swallow the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost by eating wafers, and drinking fermented grape-juice, enveloped all Europe in a funeral pall, and deluged the world with blood and tears.

On account of the noble aim, high purposes, and heroic efforts of this immortal man to rid the race of some of the dreadful superstitions that were filling the earth with crime, pestilence, poverty, filth and rags, this sublime character was pursued like a wild beast through all the States of Europe whither he fled to escape the fury of his pursuers.

He was finally overtaken, arrested, and brought back to his native home, and offered freedom by the priests of superstition if he would recant and deny all the great truths which he had discovered, and give his talent and energy for the maintenance and spread of superstition.

He spurned this offer of the heartless priesthood; he loved the human family better than he loved his own freedom; he thought of all the generations that were yet to be, and for the future good and happiness of the human race he cheerfully submitted to the ordeal of fire, and the bigots and hypocrites and friends of superstition, slowly and with ghoulish glee reduced the body of this grand man and great philosopher to ashes.

Like a brilliant star in the midnight darkness of the sixteenth century, he shines with resplendent luster; he planted the seeds of science, righteousness and pure religion in the barren soil of superstition, and made it possible today for millions of men, women and children to reap a rich harvest of freedom from the golden seeds which he sowed with a generous hand, and which will finally yield a glorious harvest of happiness for all the generations that are yet to come.

He died in triumph with a smile on his loving face, buoyed up with the certain knowledge that the sacrifice of his life would insure the final death of hundreds of the hideous gods and devils of superstition, that had enslaved the toiling millions of earth through all the dark and dreary ages.

His cherished hopes are now beginning to be realized, and it remains for us to finish the noble and sacred work for which

he died, and when we shall have succeeded in breaking the manacles and shattering the fetters, which the priests of superstition have forged and fastened upon the limbs and brain of the human race, this beautiful earth will become a happy home for all the weary and sorrowing children of men.

Every good man and every good woman should dedicate their lives, and expend their energies in heroic efforts to emancipate their fellow-men from the galling bondage of superstition, and hasten the

returning of that glorious period when mental slavery shall disappear from this beautiful earth, and Bruno's dreams of freedom and happiness for the human race shall become a blessed reality.

How long! O, how long will it yet be before mankind will learn that filth and rags, poverty and wretchedness, war and pestilence, crimes and criminals are the children of superstition?

Muncie, Ind.

Strong Letter to President Roosevelt

Common Honesty Would Compel Him to Make Answer, but Will He Do So?

Los Angeles, Cal., Nov. 10, 1908.

Theo. Roosevelt, Washington, D. C.—

Mr. President: It was with profound pleasure that I read your published letter of Nov. 9th to J. C. Martin, of Dayton, O., defending President-elect Taft's right to believe or disbelieve any religion he sees fit. It shows that you understand and endorse the true Liberal principles upon which our forefathers founded this great Republic, i.e., the right of every citizen to use his own reason and do his own thinking.

You undoubtedly recognize the fact which is now patent, that the time has passed when a pious ass like the great Nebraska Prophet, can be elected to any trust of importance.

I hope now you will remember the old adage in regard to a wise man sometimes

changing his belief, and correct a mistake you once made in referring to that greatest of all American patriots, Thomas Paine, as "a filthy little atheist," in a book you published called "Governor Morris" on page 288. In doing so, you will gain the love and respect of several millions of moral and temperate, although not pious, men and women of America, who believe that you, as well as religion, have evolved towards better humanity in the twenty years last past since you wrote the book, and we believe you are a wise and manly man enough to make the correction publicly.

If you will refer again to Thomas Paine's great work, "The Age of Reason," you will find in the first sentence of the first chapter that he believed in a god, and was therefore not an atheist, as all intelligent people like Mr. Taft are in the 20th century. I remain, with greatest respect,

Your fellow citizen,

Franklin H. Head.

Constructive Atheism

This Contributor Argues that Brotherhood of Man Implies Fatherhood of God.

(By A. E. Wade.)

We much admire Mrs. Bliven, Mr. Kerr and others of their sect for the zeal and energy they manifest in trying to build up an organization for the enlightenment and "freedom from superstition" of humanity, but we fear they cannot succeed, for their creed is only a simple Negation, and like the "house built on the sand" (on nothing), it cannot stand. Their work is destructive, a tearing down of all beliefs in a god, a Great Dynamis or Great Spirit, without giving any other basis or belief as an incentive to right living.

Mrs. Bliven does say in her article in the Blade of Oct. 25th: "We advise all our writers to prepare articles on any Free-

thinkers that deserve the title of philanthropist." Now what does philanthropist mean?

The word "philanthropist" is from two Greek words, and means brotherly love. Brotherly love pre-supposes the universal brotherhood of man; and brotherhood means children of a common parent. Then the "practice of Philanthropy" is the result of a belief in the universal brotherhood, and this necessitates the doctrine of the Universal Fatherhood (you may call it God, the Great Dynamis, or any other name you choose). If there is no God, or any thing but "blind unintelligent force," mankind have no common father, and are in no ways related or dependent on each other, and the practice of philanthropy has no foundation in reason or in common sense.

Urbana, Ill.

Our Goody-Goody Governors

**While Denouncing Gambling In One Form,
They Joyfully Receive News of the
Odds on Their Chance for
Re-election.**

(By John F. Clarke.)

There is a real morality and a pseudomorality, both existing and in working order in the country.

When a preacher or an editor draws a severe face or a dwarfed editorial in public, we look for a moral effort—and get it.

Ten or eleven times out of nine it is for the purpose of raising moral dust to cover immoral baseness.

We have State Governors, who are so overcome at the idea of the gambling instinct becoming epidemic, that they try to suppress a section of the evil, so that the whole flood shall pass to another and larger section; and then the Governors run for re-election and complacently listen to the betting odds in their own favor.

These great good Governors pass for great statesmen. They do not rise to the height of obliterating poverty. They do little for the "common herd", but they do a lot for the select and elect. These great men would probably fit the cracked and discarded moulds in which were cast the gods and saints. The seared scars and flaws of cant and hypocrisy would fit to the persons as the misfits selected for the Hall of Fame fit into the holes of that pantheon. Then the preacher elongates his visago and deplores the increase of divorce. While he is kicking up the dust on this question, a dozen other preachers are giving just cause for the article under the salo grant allowed by Jesus Christ.

If Jesus Christ was the model of the church priest, perhaps he was crucified for giving cause to angry husbands, and not by fanatical Jews. Men rendered frantic might easily be mistaken for fanatics. If preachers literally follow in the footsteps of Paul and Peter, as they claim, then those gents earned the hard knocks that they got. "The light from heaven" that Paul saw, may have been the result of seeing stars via an irate lover's blow.

"Peter's wife's sister lay ill of a fever." It may have been puerpal fever, caused by living under the same roof with a preacher.

They say one must not traduce the dead, but "these dead" did traduce the living, which was worse, and as I could not be at their time of day, I will give them of the measure they meted out to others.

We are exhorted to be like the saints. Let us see what these saints were: Mark, a Jew by birth, a Roman provincial constable and tax-gatherer, a deacon of the Order of Sadducees; wrote a "Life of Christ," which contained a genealogy, remarkable for the anachronism and inharmoniousness of detail. To look at Mark, one would not think him equal to the task, but the historian of another period declares emphatically that Mark did it. Can you follow this saint?

Matthew, a Galilean fisherman, knew how to draw seines and spin yarns of his master. Master and man are very shadowy in history and in fact. Matthew is a Synoptic saint, and corroborated the tales of Mark and Luke, which are still in need of such attention. Matthew lied conscientiously to uphold his end of the Synoptical delusion, and received the thanks of the Fathers.

Luke was a doctor of medicine of the Aesculapian School. He was a faith-healer, not that he healed faith, but that he made it meet for healing. He matched genealogies with Matthew, but Luke's had peculiarities which afforded disproof of what he sought to confirm. It was synoptically and diametrically at variance with the other affinity, both in scope and conclusion. As he failed at the physician's trade, he took to book-writing, and failed at that. He was canonized and upheld by the Fathers. Eusebius and Justinian agreed that Luke was a Synoptic, who synoped at a great rate. Would you like to simulate this saint?

John agrees to disagree with the Synoptic. As no one would synope with him, he is in a class by himself. His lies would not agree in number and person with their stories. John was a great favorite with Jesus, but became hot stuff in the end. He got into an oil vat and had a foretaste of the sinners' hell. He is also backed and endorsed by the Fathers.

St. John, the Baptist, the Foreteller and Forerunner of Christ, baptized Christ after the common formula, and lost his head to Herodians, and therefore, refrained from synopticing. His career seemed to end with the loss of his head. Would you like to live and die as this saint died?

St. Peter. He wrote some letters, and gave advice to Timothy that is still followed more than all of Luke's prescriptions. He was at variance with the writer of Ecclesiastics. Solomon and Peter were anti-synoptics. Peter promised grandiloquent phenomena and pyrotechnics on a grand scale. The firmament is to roll up as a scroll, and the earth to be eaten by fervent heat. This promise is said to still hold good. It is being kept in cold storage. Peter

blew hot and cold. He was invincible in peace and crestfallen in trouble. He was a beginner in disturbance and a quitter in engagement. He met his match in Nero, who fiddled while Rome and Peter burned. The rooster, which takes to most persons, disagreed with Peter. When the chanticleer began to crow, Peter began to forget his former friends. The rooster was responsible for a lapse of fidelity of the Petrian character. It was fate, in feathers. Are you a follower of this saint?

Paul, alias Saul, Centurion and Saint, began his career as persecutor of the sanctified. Was a bad man of the Alkali Ike type, and made tenderfoot godlings dance as he shot the soles off their sandals. God butted in and converted Paul in the midst of this most excellent diversion, and Paul turned his coat like a true politician. The "S" was changed into "P" and the great change artist was before the public in a new role. He was noted for the sage advice that he gave women in domestic affairs. Women retain their headgear in churches and theaters to this day as a mark of respect to Paul. In some theaters the men cussed 'em off, and the custom is in evolution. Paul never married, but a red-haired girl, Thecla, was sweet on him. He was either a free-lover or a race-suicider, as he opposed marriage. He wrote an auto-biography, called, "Acts of Me and Peter."

At Antioch, "Me and Peter" had a wordy scrap. Being a convert, Paul was exceeding wroth at disbelievers. He put unbelief at the head of his list of iniquities. Followest thou him?

Arlington, Ind.

Who Will Take It Up?

PHILADELPHIA.—I should like some of your readers to write an article comparing the political ideas of Alexander Hamilton and Paine and Jefferson. I now find the religious objections to Paine have disappeared, and the objections now urged are that he did so much good that they do not like to compare him with the lesser lights. Hence we should take up him in the direction of human freedom. My thanks are due to Prof. Morris Jastrow, Jr., and Prof. Leffman, both of whom acknowledged Paine's services and his right to be represented in the Pageant. Yet neither Paine nor Commodore Barry was represented, but Lord Howe and his Tories were.—J. B. ELLIOTT.

FOR A BOUND VOLUME.

WEBSTER CITY, IOWA.—Kindly list me for a bound volume of the Blade and oblige. —HARRIET M. CLOZ.

Materialist Lecture Bureau

Splendid Solution of a Difficult Problem Offered. How Such a Bureau Could be Started and Given Support.

(By Eliza Mowry Bliven.)

How to put in operation the work outlined by the Canal Dover Convention is one of the problems that appear rather difficult of solution. . . .

Principally, among others, was the establishment of a Lecture Bureau, as a medium through which Materialist propaganda could be placed before the masses, and used as an instrument for affording opportunities for weekly or bi-weekly meetings for outspoken Materialists.

I believe that most of the diseases, crimes, vices, poverty and suffering of mankind are due to ignorance of the physical and social causes of evils. Hence, I believe that what the masses most need is practical scientific teaching of real physical causes and results, in place of theological sermons, prayers, and Sunday School Bible lessons, to most successfully promote morality, health, happiness, industry, prosperity, justice, philanthropy, and other right physical, mental and moral developments. This would evolve the highest type of citizens, active in promoting the "general welfare", and rapidly reduce all kinds of evils.

As Sunday is the only free day most laborers have, this instruction must be given on that day. The present theological Sunday teachings are distasteful to the classes most needing instruction, hence they congregate where no good practical instruction reaches them, and harmful habits, crimes, and most misery results.

The church-goers are continually taught to rely on some supernatural agency to bring about all needful reforms and progress, and that they must submissively bear all misfortunes as needed preparations for an eternal happy existence after death. Thus they are kept in ignorance of real causes, and of their own abilities, and how to make the most of this life, and help others to. Hence temperance and all other reforms make very little progress, because the people are taught dependence on a god, instead of self-reliance, natural laws, and social independence.

I most earnestly desire that a capable Society be founded, to study out, prepare and have printed and distributed Scientific Lessons and Lectures for Sunday Instructions, free from all reference to any religion, bible, god or future life. These lessons must be such teaching as will influence the people into adopting these habits which will

secure their peace, health, and prosperity, and promote the moral, mental, and physical development of each, and the "general welfare" of all.

Besides Secular Sunday School Lessons and Scientific Lectures for the instruction of the people in whatever they especially need, these Sunday meetings should be made attractive to draw the crowd and become popular by music, singing, readings, recitations, discussions, and physical exercises, in which the people are encouraged to take part, and learn to excel, thus developing their abilities by competitive doing.

If a Society is founded before my death, and such Scientific Sunday Lessons and lectures are published as I have proposed in this paper, to said Society I have given and bequeathed in my Will, legally signed and witnessed in Brooklyn, Connecticut, January 28, 1901, the sum of Five Hundred Dollars, to be deposited in some Savings Bank, or other institution recognized by law for the deposit of trust funds, and the interest to be used each year toward defraying the expenses of obtaining, printing and distributing said Scientific Lessons and Lectures.

But if no Society is founded and worthy Lectures printed before my death, said Five Hundred Dollars is so bequeathed as to be divided between the Editors of eight publications which are now trying to promote health, temperance, or other reforms, or to educate in some needed line.

As soon as the publication of such Lectures is begun, I further agree to give Ten Dollars a year, while I live, to help along this work. If ninety-nine others will bequeath and donate like amounts, I believe, with this thousand dollars a year secured, a competent editor and competent writers could be found to select and write suitable Lectures and Lessons, and publish them, so the work can be started soon. Then all interested should help secure subscribers. These would loan the Lessons and Lectures to their neighbors. The Lessons should be accompanied with a suitable program for the local part of the meetings. Thus public sentiment would be won to favor and start such Meetings; each community using the best reader and teachers they have to deliver the Lecture, and teach the Lessons, while the other local talent furnish music, singing, recitations, debators, etc.

When the people are led into deciding what is right or beneficial, from knowledge of causes and results, their choice will be, "We will try to Do Right,

and Help Others to." Those willing to help, write me.

Brooklyn, Conn. Box 76.

SUPERSTITION AND THE LAW OF CAUSE AND EFFECT.

I cannot understand on what ground any person, materialist, atheist, atheist, or whatever we may call himself, can aver that superstition bears no relation to the law of cause and effect. It is just like saying that a child bears no relation to its mother. Superstition is, itself, the daughter of an adequate cause, and appears to be one of the earnest effects which the law produced upon the mind of man.

I frankly admit that superstition has no bearing upon this, or any other natural law. Neither does the most exact science. Man's knowledge, or ignorance of the workings of nature does not affect them in the least. Gravitation kept up its attraction after Newton told the world that such a force existed, just as it had done before—no more and no less. There was never a superstition so gross that it could endow man with an immaterial "soul", nor a conscience so faint as to find in him a mind apart from the operation of his material organs.

The relation existing between superstition and the law of Cause and Effect, is exactly the same as that which exists between that law and every other phenomenon. All we know, save Matter in its primordial state, is the effect of an adequate cause, and superstition is no exception to the rule. Man's ignorance of his own nature and of the universe around him has, most probably, been the cause of all superstitions; and superstitions, in their turn, have been the cause of innumerable effects—mostly evil in their nature.

Some there are who will deny that these effects have ever been otherwise than harmful; but where a superstition has been used to enforce obedience to a moral law, its effect has certainly been beneficial.

Superstition exists, and if it is declared to bear no relation to the law of Cause and Effect, it must be the miracle which we Rationalists have so long and strenuously denied.

LOU LAWRENCE.

P. S.—Much confusion of thought will be averted when students come to a clear conception of the difference between the civil and the natural law. Civil law consists of edicts, or rules, laid down by an individual, or individuals, for the government of other individuals of the same species; while natural laws are simply statements that certain constituents and certain conditions always produce certain results.

L. L.

Bernard Shaw on his Religion

Playwright and Novelist Defends His Position against the Strictures of Editor Foote in London Freethinker. Latter's Rejoinder in our Next Issue.

(From London Freethinker.)

My Dear Foote:—

May I explain myself to the younger members of your flock—if you will allow me so to describe the readers of the Freethinker—who may otherwise be discouraged in their adventure into Freethought by the taunt that so conspicuous an atheist as myself recanted as soon as he was old enough to know better.

I have never changed my mind about popular religion in this country. I do not claim that this is a merit on my part: on the contrary, a genuine Freethinker should change his mind as often and as carefully as he changes his linen. But as a matter of fact, to be deplored or applauded as the case may be I loathe the mess of mean superstition and misunderstood prophecies which is still rammed down the throats of children in this country under the name of Christianity as contemptuously as ever. And in my opinion the blackest spot in English public life is the cowardly dishonor in which our public men leave the Blasphemy Laws unrepented, and imply, in all their utterances on religious education and imperial organization, that they worship the savage idol in the tale of the bears sent to eat the children who mocked Elisha's baldness; that our Mahometan, Buddhist and Hindu fellow subjects are walking in darkness whilst our Glassites and Agapemites and Plymouth Brethren and Countess of Huntingdonians are bathing in celestial light; and that Mr. Edmund Gosse's father was a more enlightened man than Matthew Arnold. We may congratulate ourselves on the fact that the present Government contains only one man stupid enough to institute a prosecution for blasphemy; but what are we to say to that other fact that though every one of his fellow ministers who is of sufficient importance to make his opinions ascertainable, would, if the Blasphemy Laws were sincerely and impartially carried out, be an ex-prisoner legally incapable of holding his office, they all cowered shamelessly before the superstition of that colleague, and virtually committed themselves to the opinion that a man should be ruinously punished with the vilest criminals for refusing to be

lieve that the birth of Jesus was parthenogenetic.

Your younger readers will now ask why—if these are my views—that I am regarded by so many Secularists as an apostate. When I spoke on Progress in Freethought at the Hall of Science after the death of Bradlaugh, why was I received with a burst of fury such as no clergyman need have feared there? Why do the congregations of the City Temple and Westbourne Park Chapel, with their famous pastors in the chair, make much of me, whilst the National Secular Society, after two trials, had to drop me as an intolerable blasphemer whose lectures would drive away the old guard on whose subscriptions the Society depended?

The answer is that I am implacably and contemptuously anti-rationalist and anti-materialist, and that the Sectarianism of the National Secular Society, in spite of your leadership, is crudely rationalistic and maternalistic. When I called myself an atheist years ago in order to make it clear that I was on the side of Bradlaugh in his fight with the House of Commons, I meant that I had exactly the same opinion of what his persecutors called God as Mahomet had of the stones which the Arabs worshipped before he converted them. I used a negative term to express a negative position. I repeatedly and publicly repudiated the term Agnostic (logical as it was) because an Agnostic was then understood to declare, with regard to the existence of God (which then meant Jehovah), that he did not know. I said that I could not take that position, because I did know that there was no such person. When questioners asked how I could prove a negative, I asked them how they could prove that there was not a blue horse with green wings capering at that moment on the roof of St. Paul's Cathedral and what they would think of my intellect and character if, merely because I had not been to Ludgate Hill to make sure, I hesitated to deny, dogmatically and flatly, that there was such a horse so occupied? .

So far, the Secularists regarded me as one of themselves. But neither Secularists nor any one else can live on negations, any more than vegetarians can live on mere abstention from meat. When the account given in Genesis of the origin of the universe held the field, the man who said "Rubbish!" made an important contribution to Freethought; and our consciousness of that made us all say "Rubbish!" with an earnestness and eloquence which now seem ridiculous. For, very unexpectedly, Genesis fell before us

like the walls of Jericho. And from that moment, the freethinkers, instead of being met with angry assertions of the actual existence of the Garden of Eden, found themselves eagerly and respectfully invited to explain the universe by people who quite agreed that the Bible story was impossible. The Agnostic reply "I don't know," meant simple extinction of the freethinker as a reader of thought. It may be a frank answer and a true answer; but so is the answer of the man who says "I don't know" when you ask him the way to Putney. You do not question his honesty; but you take no further interest in him.

When, as Nietzsche-Zarathustra put it, "God is dead, Atheism dies also. Blasphemy is tedious to people who have smashed their Bibles. I do not say that there is no work left for atheists and Blasphemers among people who remain steeped in the crude idolatry that is still all that religion means to large masses of the English people, though I doubt whether the line can be drawn higher now than at what the Roman Catholic Church gives up as Invincible Ignorance. But that is not my job. I prefer positive work; and, indeed, whether we like it or not, we all have to face positive work if we are to retain any hold of the pioneering section of the public. When you said, very penetratingly, in your article on my City Temple sermon that God is in process of manufacture, you put Atheism aside just as a man puts his gun aside when he has shot the tiger and must set to work with his spade. The clearing away of false solutions is not a clearing away of problems; quite the contrary; it brings you face to face with them. Denial has no further interest; you must begin to affirm.

Under this pressure there arose Neo-Darwinism, or the explanation of all phenomena as the result of Natural Selection. The world, according to this view, is only a purposeless accident, interesting only because of its amazing simulation of design and the ingenuity of its explanation. Opposed to this stands the 1790-1830 theory of Evolution as the struggle of a creative Will or Purpose (called by me the Life Force) towards higher forms of life—God in process of manufacture, as you put it. Neo-Darwinism is a materialistic theory. Evolution is a mystical one.

The Secularists embraced Natural Selection rather because it was the opposite extreme to Jehovah-worship, than from any serious grasp of it and its ghastly implications.

Continued on page 13

BLUE GRASS BLADE.

Published weekly, at Lexington, Ky.

Founded by Charles Chilton Moore in 1884 and edited by him until his death, February 7, 1906

JAMES E. HUGHES, - - - - - Publisher and Manager
 JOHN R. CHARLESWORTH, - - - - - Editor
 126-8 N. Limestone Street, Lexington, Ky.
 P. O. Box 398.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

By mail, postpaid \$1.50 per year in advance
 Five new yearly subscribers at one remittance, \$1.00 each.
 Five trial subscriptions sent in with one remittance, for six months, 50 cents each.
 Trial subscriptions, 15 cents per month.
 Foreign subscriptions, postpaid, \$2.00 per year.

ADVERTISING RATES.

One inch, single column, 1 insertion, 50 cents; one month, or four insertions, \$1.00; six months, \$5.00; one year, \$8.00.
 Quarter column, single, 1 insertion, \$2.00; one month, \$4.00; six months, \$20.00; one year, \$20.00.
 Half column, whole column, or larger advertisements at special rates upon application.

The publisher has the right to reject any and all advertisements offered.

GENERAL BUSINESS RULES.

ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS to the Blade will be discontinued at the expiration of the term for which the subscription has been paid up in advance. The address slip on the paper will show subscribers the date of expiration of subscription. Back numbers or numbers omitted will be sent, if asked for, upon renewal in case of discontinuance.

SHOULD ANY SUBSCRIBER change his or her address, advise this office, giving both old and new address, as desired.

THE OFFICE of publication of the Blade is at 126-128 North Limestone Street, Lexington, Kentucky, to which all Freethinkers will be given a hearty welcome.

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ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BLUE GRASS BLADE, P. O. Box 398, Lexington, Ky.

THE EMERGENCY FUND.

From one who is too modest to allow his name to be used in public print, we have received a very handsome contribution to this fund. By this donation we can still send the Blade to poor and indigent Freethinkers, and the burden of paying subscriptions is thus lifted off their shoulders. Keep on swelling the fund.

Previously acknowledged	- - -	\$ 9.50
Buckeye	- - - - -	5.00
Total	- -	\$14.50

PREACHERS ARE CHALLENGED.

The following challenge which has been published in a daily paper at Circleville, Ohio, as paid matter, will not only be sufficient to explain itself, but will show our readers the degree of interest felt in the cause of Freethought. The Blade has had the clipping in its possession for more than a week, but we have not yet heard of any reply being vouchsafed. It reads—

"A CHALLENGE—To any minister of the gospel of Circleville or the State of Ohio, who has the courage to defend his Savior, Devil, Hell or Bible; you can arrange a debate for one or more evenings, by addressing the under-

signed of this city. If you are afraid to debate these matters (which you claim are so important to humanity) upon a public platform where the other side can be heard, then be very careful what public statements you make from the pulpit, as you will be called upon to answer to the proper authorities for any lies, misstatements or slander, indulged in.

"Franklin H. Head."

A DANIEL COMES TO JUDGMENT.

The day of Freethought victory is nigh! Creeds no longer command attention, and are falling into disrepute as well as disrespect. Material substitutes are of no avail. The modern church is on a rapid decline, and the aid of music, singing, together with temporization, are unable to render efficient service in checking its headlong course.

When citing these facts to your orthodox neighbors, do not give them as coming from the Blade alone. It is not our voice that speaketh, but the voice of the people through the instrumentality of the press. It is a popular verdict and judgment is now rendered thereon. The Los Angeles Evening News, editorially, in its issue of November 4 last, offers the following caustic comment upon conditions confronting the orthodox church.

"This is a period of unrest among many of the evangelical churches. Their devoted members and their leaders are at a loss to account for the change that has come over these organizations in the past twenty-five years. Little by little these churches lost their hold on the men. To maintain interest and compete with other attractions, better music was provided, and the ministers modernized their sermons. Still, relatively speaking, the attendance dwindled. One of the evangelical churches has confessed its inability to make progress in so fertile a field as San Francisco, and admits that it has made no real growth in that city in the past twenty-five years. Another of these churches changed its articles of faith, and most radically. In most of them the literal hell has been abolished and a tacit (but not admitted) species of universalism has been tolerated."

NO INCORPORATION.

The suggestion offered by the Blade two weeks ago regarding a plan of incorporation, whereby the paper might acquire some working capital through a diversity of individual interests, has not been favorably accepted by those qualified to judge of such an undertaking, and, therefore, according to a number of entreaties, the proposition will be laid aside, and no further consideration given thereto.

Under the circumstances the Blade will continue publication under its present business plans and arrangements.

In addition to what was said in these columns concerning the plan, a number of personal letters had been sent out to selected friends, asking for their views upon the subject being considered. The general trend of the answers received, while disfavoring any change in the Blade manage-

ment, assured us of a number of constant and valuable friends who are willing to do all they can to aid the paper in its struggles for life, liberty and happiness.

One of the most valued of the letters we have received is from Dr. E. B. Foote, of New York. He is opposed to the incorporation plan. In his letter he states that even should the Blade succeed in incorporating, the arrangement would be but temporary, and any financial aid extended would be in the nature of an outright donation, instead of investing in stock that would be supposed to pay dividends, yet enshrouded in so much doubt and uncertainty.

Mrs. Eliza Mowry Bliven writes against the corporation and offers, us a plan for securing the much needed encouragement, the creation of a \$1,000 fund for the benefit of the Blade, whereby an assistant editor could be employed and the present editor take more to lecture work, the building up of local societies and enlisting additional workers in our cause.

E. D. Nannan, T. J. Minor, I. M. Miller, Charles Betscher, and others have also written, and each of these deplored the necessity of advocating such an emergency, express a willingness to take stock in the proposed corporation, if the act of incorporation should be taken, and otherwise do all in their power to assist the Blade to proper financial strength.

Supreme satisfaction is felt at the many kind words these letters contain, the beneficial suggestions given, and the hearty, cheerful optimism displayed. But these do not solve the present problem of meeting the expenses incurred in the publication of the Blade.

There is a way by which the Blade could be made independent. There is a way whereby the Blade would be instantly relieved from its great financial stress. That way is by all delinquent subscribers immediately paying what they owe, and if not intending to remain on our lists, to frankly say so and let us cut them off in order to save expense of material and postage on them. An examination of our books and mailing lists, combined, shows that at this good hour there is, approximately, \$3,000 due and owing to the Blade on the delinquent list. We know that many of these delinquents are good, and will, sooner or later, pay up in full, but the burden of being compelled to carry such a large debt has necessitated the borrowing of money to enable us to keep up, at interest, thereby increasing the burden, as no interest is forthcoming on the delinquent subscriptions. This borrowed money will be due January 1. We have no prospects of paying it, and will be compelled to ask for the privilege of extending it by paying up the interest already accrued.

Our friends must realize that this is a very unsatisfactory condition, and the mental attitude arising therefrom is not conducive to the best and highest quality of work. Could this delinquency be fully met and satisfied, our indebtedness would be wiped out, the burdens would disappear and the Blade be on solid ground. It was for the purpose of seeking a method whereby this burden might be more easily borne by the many, instead of by one, that the plan

of incorporation was suggested, but as our best friends have advised against it, we feel that we are in a measure bound to give heed to what they have to say.

Owing to the fact that this question has been placed before the Blade's friends, we deem it only candor to say further that when the change was made in the editorship and in the form and manner of publication, in January last, the sum of \$1,000 was borrowed, at six per cent, which was put into the Blade for the purpose of sustaining the change and general improvement made at that time. The severe industrial depression of the past year, or more, has, doubtless, had much to do with present conditions, but the Blade's income since that time has not even met the additional expense of publication, much less enabled us to accumulate any funds wherewith to meet, in due time, the debt we had assumed. This is the truth of the situation, and as so much of a personal nature depends upon a proper solution of the existing problem, we feel constrained to give our reasons, in full, for what was previously suggested.

At first blush the plan appeared feasible. Being fully advised by many good and valuable friends, we are now convinced that the present method of publication is the best and a mighty effort will be made to keep the Blade going and make it self-sustaining.

The trouble is in the delinquent list, and once that is satisfactorily settled, peace, happiness and progress will surely follow. The only problem is how to accomplish it.

JOINT DEBATE ARRANGED FOR.

The editor of the Blade will engage in a joint debate with Rev. Leander S. Keyser, a Lutheran preacher, at Canal Dover, Ohio, where the two Freethought conventions were held in September last, and it may be said that this is one of the outgrowths of that assemblage of Freethought men and women.

The debate will take place on Thursday and Friday, February 11th and 12th, 1909, and will be held at Canal Dover, although the place of meeting is not yet made known, it will, presumably, be held in the Hardesty Opera House.

From information vouchsafed, it appears that Rev. Keyser, who took exceptions to some of the speeches and arguments offered at those Freethought conventions, especially Dr. Wilson's speech, found an occasion to "answer" them from his pulpit on the Sunday night following the adjournment of the conventions. Of course all the speakers and members had then returned to their homes. The Canal Dover papers made announcement of the sermon, from which source the Freethinkers of Canal Dover learned thereof. Samuel Toomey happened to meet Rev. Keyser, and suggested the debate. Mr. Keyser expressed his willingness to undertake such a controversy, and the Blade's editor was communicated with. Rev. Keyser was therupon communicated with, and his written acceptance came to hand in due time.

All that was required on the Freethought side was that

the propositions for discussion should be so worded as to bring in sharp contrast the moral influences and principles of Christianity and Freethought, and the following has been agreed upon:

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11TH.

Rev. Keyser to affirm—

Resolved, That there is sufficient moral, historical and scientific evidence to prove that the bible is the inspired word of god.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12TH.

Charlesworth to affirm—

Resolved, That the principles of Secularism are better adapted to meet the needs and promote the welfare of the human family than the principles of Christianity.

In order to have some representation in the immediate locality for the purpose of agreeing upon the detail of arrangements, the Blade's editor has named Samuel Toomey, Walter C. Hardesty and George O. Roberts as a committee to that end.

With a full understanding that the object of the debate is to ascertain truth, and not a mere personal conquest, we go into this forensic tourney with full confidence regarding the outcome. Rev. Keyser submitted the propositions which were accepted with but slight modification.

Rev. Keyser is accredited with being a man of ability, and has written and published a number of books upon the life and habits of birds, including, also, a religious novel, intended to aid the cause of Christianity. Properly conducted this debate should prove of mental profit to Christian and Freethinker alike.

While on this trip to Canal Dover other lecture appointments will be taken, and a number of local clubs under the Buckeye Secular Union is expected to be organized as a result of these efforts.

It is to be hoped that so far as the Freethinkers in Canal Dover and Tuscarawas County are concerned, they will do all they can to make this discussion memorable in the history of the district.

WHAT WILL ROOSEVELT DO?

Many Freethinkers will appreciate the action of Franklin H. Heald, of Higher Science, in addressing a letter to President Roosevelt, commanding him for his utterances averse to religious liberty in America while making answer to a citizen of Ohio concerning inquiries made as to the religious sentiments and pretensions of the President-elect. His letter, presumably, is in the hands of the President long before this article is written, appears in another column of this issue.

The real question presented here, however, is, what will Roosevelt do? Will he be manly enough, courageous enough, honest enough, to admit and correct his former mistake and misrepresentation of the character of the man who gave the American colonies their freedom and independence? Doubtless, with Roosevelt, as with all mankind, the years will enable a clearer and more unprejudiced vision

to be had of events obtained from the records of written history and of which we were not personally cognizant. The wider experiences afforded by almost unlimited opportunities in judging personal character will necessarily bring toleration and respect, where prejudice and passion once did reign. Even a Roosevelt, he of strenuous in personal characteristics, say of him what we will, aye, and view him in the light of his utterances a generation ago, must have been amenable to the law of intellectual development and his vision of things undergone a broadening and softening. The only honest, righteous, courageous course for Roosevelt to pursue, is to read the Age of Reason, the author of which he so outrageously misrepresented, and, having done so, be frank enough to answer Mr. Heald's letter and recall his printed falsehood. Will he do so? Has he sufficient moral courage to do it? The answer to these questions is in the future. Should Roosevelt deign to make answer, Mr. Heald promises that the Blade shall have his answer for publication, provided, he is not restricted therein.

What might suggest to the observer that there is a possibility of Roosevelt making answer to Mr. Heald's letter, is the apparent modification in the religious views formerly held by the President. In his recently published letter to the Dayton man, defending Judge Taft's right to membership in any religious denomination without being called to a political account, Roosevelt said:

"Discrimination against the holder of one faith means retaliatory discrimination against men of other faiths."

True, indeed, and only too solemnly and seriously true, is the above statement. These discriminations, encouraged by sect votaries and assiduously pushed to the front in our political and social life, are the prime causes of religious disturbances and hatreds, the self-same spirit that led to the religious butcheries recorded in human history. Even in the appointment of chaplains in penitentiaries, in the army and navy, in legislative assemblies, the same sectarian rivalry produces itself, and as all can not get in on the ground floor, petty jealousies ensue and political revenge is at once threatened. Intrigue follows intrigue and all in the name of him who is said to be the prince of peace. But why the necessity for pandering to any religious faith? Why the necessity for any religious faith at all? Holding to the views personally expressed, is it not patent to the President that in absolute justice as between man and man, there should be no religious preferences in matters of legislation or executive prerogative, and that all sects should be placed upon an equal footing by being officially ignored? Roosevelt must realize the full force of such an argument, for he further declares, that to subject Judge Taft to public criticism and political disfavor because of his religious beliefs, would be to "negate the first principle of our government, which guarantees complete religious liberty and the right to each man to act in religious affairs as his own conscience dictates."

Did not Thomas Paine enjoy that same right of liberty of conscience which Roosevelt now insists is "the first principle of our government" when he preferred to reject

churchianity but express an abiding faith in the existence of deity? Was Roosevelt justified, under "the first principles of our government" in denouncing Paine as a "filthy little atheist"? If he was not so justified, and every fact proves that he was not, then those same "first principles of our government" insist and demand that Roosevelt correct his manifest error and make due and honest reparation for the great wrong he has done. With his present declarations in favor of religious toleration it is the only course left for him to take, and, taking it, he will redeem himself in the minds of thousands of Freethinkers and liberty-loving people in this country.

It is indeed comforting to know that even a Roosevelt will admit that Lincoln was unorthodox, that the fathers of our repnblie were decidedly un-Christian in their beliefs, that John Quincy Adams was a Unitarian, and that Roosevelt, himself has had the good judgment and courage to appoint men to public office without the slightest regard to their opinions concerning the orthodox faith.

Now let him answer Heald's letter and do the amende honorable to the character of Thomas Paine.

GIRLS QUIZZING A PREACHER.

There is one preacher in the country, if no more, Rev. J. E. Snyder, of the Episcopal church, in Chicago, whose recent experiences must induce him to believe there is considerable virtue in the scriptural injunction "to agree with thine adversary quickly lest he convert thee."

From a report in the columns of the Chicago Evening News, date of November 12, we learn that Rev. Snyder has been endeavoring to promulgate his gospel by visiting the different workshops and factories in the Windy City, and there talking to the men, women, boys and girls(permitting them to question and quiz him concerning the attitude of the Christian church toward labor and its utility to the masses in general. The report also shows that most of the quizzing came from the girls, and a perusal of the list of questions reported to have been propounded to the sky-pilot we are impelled to conclude that there is very small religion or religious proclivities among these feminine factory workers. This is encouraging, for we realize that from these young women must come the mothers of future posterity, and are justified in the inference that later ages will witness an exodus of women from the ranks of church drudgery and orthodox humility and servitude. The church depends upon woman for its very existence, but it must be a scant support the church will receive from the young women who propounded some of these questions. Read some of them:

Who made God?

Who made Satan?

Is God responsible for sin?

Why are there so many religions?

Does God hear and answer prayer?

Why did he not answer the prayer of the martyrs?

What benefit is the church to the workingman?

Then there were several questions along sociological lines. Some of them dealt with the candidates for President in the last campaign. One referred to Debs and his character.

While the alleged answers to the foregoing questions, as purported to have been given, were furnished to the press by the parson in a personal interview, they are decidedly unsatisfactory, although the parson evidently thinks otherwise. The best course to have followed would have been for the reporter to have interviewed the girls and from their own lips learn whether they derived satisfaction from what the parson had to say. This, the reporter did not do; he took the parson's word for it; gave the parson's views alone, and the report is but a one-sided affair at best.

Bully for the girls of Chicago. It is a self-evident fact that they are very much alive to religious topics; that they have been doing some thinking on their own account and were able to sit before a preacher of the gospel and quiz him upon the dogmas and doctrines of his theological system. What a mighty step forward! What an advance from the day when a woman was told "keep silence" and be in "subjection."

As for the questions themselves, the report shows that the first was absolutely unanswered. The preacher dodged it. He made no effort, in his reported interview, to even explain why he did not answer it. The Blade knows, however, that he could not answer it. Question No. 2 was never answered. The third question was dodged, for, while the preacher denied that God was responsible for sin, and urged that Satan was, he omitted to state that God was responsible for Satan. The fourth question was not answered, but had an honest effort been made, the preacher would have been compelled to make admissions showing that his own religious brand was but a patch-work arrangement. This would have opened the eyes of many now sincerely believing. The fifth question was answered in the affirmative, but no proof was offered in substantiation thereof. It was a mere assertion, minus authority. The sixth question was answered by saying that God had put the martyrs in a frame of mind whereby they could withstand their sufferings, but no attempt was made to justify any suffering on the part of a controlling deity. The last question was answered by saying that Chicago would be an unfit place to live in if all the preachers quit preaching, and that the church made human life purer and better. This, too, in face of the fact that human society and the conditions governing society have only improved as the people have become indifferent to the church.

The preacher closes his interview by stating that the meeting gave him much genuine pleasure, but judging from the report given we are inclined to doubt the truth thereof. On the contrary, we opine that this preacher will be in no great hurry to repeat the visit and have to go through with the same interrogating as was given him by these girls.

If these girls could be induced to write out their own views of that meeting the Blade would gladly give them space for the publication.

Incorporation is Not Approved

Expressions from Blade Readers Upon the Proposed Plan, with Several Timely Suggestions for General Welfare and Improvement

The following letters have been received from personal and interested friends of the Blade regarding our proposition to incorporate, which, from their tenor, have impelled us to abandon the notion:

FROM DR. E. S. FOOTE.

NEW YORK CITY.—Sorry your outlook is discouraging, but I don't like this plan. Probably others feel the same. You may get in enough to float a year, and then you will go the way of other papers that have died out on the stock plan. Folks will donate yearly to individuals who are struggling for the cause—but to a stock company—not likely. That's how it strikes

Yours Truly.

FROM ELIZA MOWRY BLIVEN.

BROOKLYN, CONN.—I am sorry, very sorry that the Blue Grass Blade can't pay its way. That Corporation plan looks to me like a gigantic begging. I doubt whether you could raise \$200 that way, and you would be a servant of many bosses then. What we need is plans to make more Materialists, and whenever a few are made to have them start Sunday meetings without religion. The more Materialists, the more subscribers to our papers, till both the B. G. B. and P. P. will be self-supporting. DON'T increase the size, but increase its quality or ability to make Materialists, and guide to make their meetings a success everywhere, developing their own lecturers by discussions and addresses, as they have done already at Canal Dover and in San Francisco, and by lessons in the Blue Grass Blade. It seems to me, what you need is to find a suitable editor to take your drudgery and carry on what you have begun; and then you go lecturing half the time, making Materialists, getting subscribers, starting meetings; and then guide all those meetings, by suitable programs and lectures, etc., in the Blade. Don't have any board of directors over you. Don't start that Corporation. Only ask for \$1,000 to employ a suitable assistant editor, and bridge over the present difficulty. By making Materialists, and showing the people

how to run their own meetings and develop their abilities, you can make a success of the Blue Grass Blade. Better stop sending it to all that don't pay the week their subscription runs out. Don't beg for the old subs. that stop paying. You can't afford it.

FROM A BUCKEYE.

CINCINNATI, O.—In reply to yours proposing stock subscriptions, I beg leave to inclose five dollars, not for stock, but for the Emergency Fund. I am too old to buy stock in any enterprise.

FROM E. D. NAUMANN.

SIGOURNEY, IOWA.—In response to your appeal in last issue of the Blade, will say: In the first place, find enclosed \$2.50, part of which was given me for this purpose by my mother, who is also a subscriber to the Blade. For this, please send the Blade for one year to a friend whose address is given below. I know he will enjoy reading the greater part of it, and may conclude to become a regular subscriber thereafter. For the remainder of the enclosure please insert the enclosed orchestra card in Blade. I hardly expect any business as a result, but want to help the Blade a little anyway. I hardly think the Incorporation Stock Company plan would be any more remunerative and satisfactory than the present plan, though of course the Blade must be kept going. The weeds and brambles of orthodox superstition are not near all cut down. The Blade has been especially good since you assumed the book shape, with portraits and biography. It is exceedingly fine, and so far as I am concerned, I will agree to pay \$2.00 a year for it in the future. How many of the paying subscribers will volunteer to do this? If this inclination should become epidemic, it would help a little no doubt. Freethinkers are not afraid of the devil and hell, hence there is too much apathy. If they would put forth half the effort that Christians do to save their little shriveled souls from hell, the Blade could be published in seven colors and circulated by hundreds of thousands. Yours for success.

FROM I. M. MILLER.

UPLAND, IND.—Count on self for one or more shares of stock to help keep the Blade going, for without its gleam around the edges of the harvest field so persistent and everlastingly reaped by the cradle of superstition, we would look for the few faithful to fade away indeed. And why will Blade readers not pay up and renew their subscriptions, that the editor may be made happy in his efforts to reduce the crime of Christian grace, greed and graft?

FROM MARK TRIPLETS.

CINCINNATI, O.—In a long letter this contributor, who is only sixteen years of age, suggests a concert as a means of raising funds in aid of the Blade. (Ed.)

FROM R. T. SHAW.

CORINTH, KY.—I will subscribe to one share of stock if you should incorporate the Blade. Let me know when you undertake it.

FROM J. W. GILBERT.

FRIEND, NEB.—I have read your proposition for incorporation. Will take five dollars and pay soon, and may take more later.

FROM T. J. MINOR.

OCOEE, FLA.—I have just read your editorial in the Blue Grass Blade—"Shall the Blade Live or Die?" By all means it must live. The Blade has reached too high to let it drop now. It is doing too much good with its able corps of contributors, and is a great means of educating the people. It is indeed a great hardship for you to do all the work and bear a financial loss also. I think the plan of incorporation a good one, and I heartily approve of it if it can be done, and will take some stock in it, not as a paying investment at present, but to help the Blade live, and to lessen the burden on you. I will take one share of stock and more if I can.

BERNARD SHAW ON HIS RELIGION.

(Continued from page 7)

tions. I took my own side, the mystical side, which at once brings me far nearer to Mr. Campbell, to Dr. Clifford, to the late Samuel Butler, than to any Neo-Darwinian atheist. I cannot force any man to use my term Life Force to denote what he calls God; but if we both mean the same thing, and if the Neo-Darwinian atheist means something profoundly different, I had better be taken to be on the theologian's side against the atheist. Only, I prefer my own term, as it suggests none of the attributes of the ridiculous old *deus ex machina* to whose stuffed shoulders we used to shift all our responsibilities. If you ask me to show you my "god's" head, I show you my own head (or yours). If you doubt the strength of its hands, I tell you that it has no other hands than ours. And I solemnly warn you that if the present failure of our heads and hands to make a higher life possible continues, it will assuredly evolve some creature (it may not be even a Superman; it may be a Supersnake) who will clear us out as ruthlessly and completely as we have cleared the bison out of America, keeping only a few of us in the Zoo for the amusement of its young. That will certainly happen if, by taking to Neo-Darwinism, we all become, what so many Neo-Darwinians already are, a mob of futile cowards, seeking the elixir of life by vivisection because they have not the courage to seek political liberty by dynamite.

No doubt all this is obscure to people who imagine that Darwin invented Evolution, and who conclude, when I say that Mr. Campbell's Christ is, apart from a few in-essential survivals of the old legend, as credible and interesting a person as Mr. Keir Hardie, that I am preaching the doctrine of the Atonement. What I said at the City Temple was a simple statement of fact. I have always said that it was obvious to me as a professional expert in literature that the gospels are fictions and the epistles documents. I do not object to the gospels on that account any more than to the dramas of Euripides or Shakespeare; nor do I admit that a fiction is less true than a document—quite the opposite, in fact. There are no lies in Hamlet; and our blue books are mostly full of lies. But I regarded Jesus as a fictitious character exactly as I regard Shakespeare's Henry V. as a fictitious character. There may have been an actual preacher named Jesus (or seven or eight Jesuses, as Mr. J. M. Robertson once contended) just as there was undoubtedly a king called Henry V.; but there was so much less evidence, and the point was so unimportant in view of the fact that neither the Evangelist or Shakespeare were engaged in the senseless work of reproducing mere

biographical facts, that it was not worth making any reservations. Mr. Campbell, however, has reconstructed a credibly historical Jesus with such success that I am now quite prepared to entertain the proposition that he existed in the Post Office Directory sense, and that some of the most fantastic utterances recorded in the gospels may be accepted as genuine traditions in the light of Mr. Campbell's view of Christianity as a movement that dates from several centuries before Christ. This no more implies a change in my religious opinions than if Mr. Campbell had convinced me that there actually was once a patriarch who saved his tribe and his farm stock from an inundation by means of a raft and houseboat, and that his name was Noah. You will appreciate the irony of the fact that whereas the religious papers have quite understood this secularist explanation of my position, the Secularist papers persist in taking the old-fashioned evangelical view of it as the return to the fold of a lost sheep.

I have once or twice before been on the point of writing to the Freethinker to explain the situation. Dare I say why I refrained? Well, it was because I feared to force you into the position of having either to lose some of your oldest subscribers, or else pretend to be as bigotedly materialistic as some of them are. My conviction that you would not hesitate to speak your mind on that account was only an additional reason for not creating the dilemma. But now I think it better to get the explanation off my mind, leaving it open to you to treat this letter (of which I have kept no copy) as a public or a private one just as you think fit.

Yours faithfully,
G. BERNARD SHAW.

CHRISTIANITY.

(By "The Chaplain.")

Gigantic swindle on the human race,
Thou art a monster with human face!
Professing truth and love for all mankind,
You hate the Teacher and destroy the mind.

You lead your people with your ghosts astray
From the light of Science that points the way

To nobler things than in thy Bible found.
It's God a phantom of a shadow ground.
Stupendous lie on earth's created form—
A lie gigantic of a "Saviour" born
From trusting virgin of the Jewish race,
With faith eternal in a ghostly face.

Lies—all lies from thy foundation stone,
To base assumption of a heavenly home,
Through gates of pearl that stand ajar
For fools,
With brains made muddy in your Sunday Schools.

Away, away, with thy miasma smell!
With creeds and dogmas of a burning hell,
Thy love that is selfish in its narrow creed,
Thy faith unshaken in your hour of need.
Brave men rise higher under freedom's light,
Away forever with thy Christian blight!

Correspondence

Answer to the Puzzle.

PITTSFIELD, ME.—The squirrel problem in last week's Blade is supposed to be a stunner. Because the squirrel keeps exactly in front of the hunter, many people think that the hunter doesn't go around him. I take the opposite view; and to illustrate my position, will suppose that the hunter starts at the most northerly point of his circle, the squirrel being exactly south of him, and travels east, and when he arrives in the east the squirrel is west of him. When the hunter is south the squirrel is north of him, and so on round the circle. When the hunter gets to the starting point the squirrel is exactly south of him again, the hunter having been east of him, south of him, west of him, and back north of him. Will some one tell how the hunter got on every side of him without going around him?—JOHN B. BARNES.

From a True-Blue Liberal.

FAIRMONT SPRINGS, B. C.—I have been thinking I would write to you for the last two months, but have been working hard, and am old, having almost reached my 72nd year, and could not get up enough steam. I got a fall a few days ago, and am not quite able to work yet. So I am writing to you and enclosing \$2.00 for the Emergency Fund. I could not stand it any longer when I read the letters published in the Blade from those old folks. I just had to dig up. I think there is a brighter day for the dear old Blue Grass Blade. Freethought is taking more courage all over the country. The ball is rolling and they cannot stop it. Truth will prevail in the end; the god idea is losing ground. I wonder if the Christian ever tries to find out where their god was when he was creating time and space. Say, don't it make you sleepy? Can we make them any better? Well, I suppose it is worth a try.—SAMUEL BREWER.

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